

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-690-4152

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: (e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)	September 30, 2015 – July 31, 2017
Authorized Representative Name:	Lynn Prior
Authorized Representative Phone:	610-703-6954
Authorized Representative Email:	Lynn@NurtureNatureCenter.org
Recipient Organization Name:	Nurture Nature Center
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Promotion of Direct Producer-to-Consumer Markets in the Lehigh Valley
Grant Agreement Number: (e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)	15-FMPP-PA-0116
Year Grant was Awarded:	2015
Project City/State:	Lehigh Valley, PA
Total Awarded Budget:	\$100,000

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

☐ Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

☒ Different individual: Name: Allison Czapp; Email: Allison@NurtureNatureCenter.org; Phone: 610-253-4190

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.
 - i. **Goal/Objective 1:** Increase consumption of locally grown foods in the Lehigh Valley by promoting direct producer-to-consumer markets in the Lehigh Valley, including those in underserved communities.

a. Progress Made:

NNC is aggressively promoting the Lehigh Valley local food economy with a multi-faceted strategy.

Online Strategies

Our online strategies are making it easier for consumers to locate and purchase locally grown foods. Our new www.BuyLocalGLV.org website was launched in February 2016. New features, such as the Local Food Finder <http://www.buylocalglv.org/local-food-map/>, Pick-Your-Own information, CSA Delivery Charts <http://www.buylocalglv.org/csa/>, and Agritourism <http://www.buylocalglv.org/agritourism/>, were added to the site. In addition, the site highlights special events and news, and is mobile-friendly.

NNC created a social media campaign, including a promotional video entitled, “Building our Local Food System,” to encourage consumers to search online for local foods, sign up for e-newsletters, learn about local food events, and receive information about the benefits of buying locally grown foods.

In February of both 2016 and 2017, NNC gathered information from our local CSA farmers and created charts detailing all CSA pick-up locations in the Greater Lehigh Valley (Berks, Lehigh, and Northampton counties as well as neighboring locations in surrounding counties). These charts provided sizes and costs of shares, pick-up locations, length of season, and possible add-ons, as well as the possibility of using SNAP benefits to purchase the shares.

In addition, we send out 68 e-newsletters to consumers to provide information about what’s in season and let them know about special local food events happening in the Lehigh Valley.

2016 Buy Local Challenge:

BFBL established a 2016 Buy Local Challenge to educate consumers about the many benefits of choosing locally grown foods and encourage them to spend more of their food dollars on them. A specific page was created on the BuyLocalGLV.org website (<http://www.buylocalglv.org/buy-local-challenge/>) where people could make a pledge to purchase more local foods during the 2016 season. The Challenge was promoted on our farmers’ market trifold, in our e-newsletters, and through social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We also created a promotional video, which can be viewed on our website <http://www.buylocalglv.org/buy-local-challenge/>, YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/BFBLGLV>, or Facebook. Each week, beginning May 8th, one name was randomly chosen from those that had taken the pledge to win a local food prize.

Taste: A Celebration of Local Farms and Food:

In order to really get consumers excited about locally grown foods, BFBL organized a Local Foods Festival, entitled *Taste: A Celebration of Local Farms and Food*. It was held Sunday, July 24th, 2016 at the ArtsQuest campus and PBS demonstration kitchen. Activities included a large Valley-wide producer-only farmers' market with 37 vendors offering fresh fruits and vegetables, value-added products, poultry and meat, eggs, honey, baked goods, and flowers. There were also 31 educational displays and games that informed about all aspects of our local food system, live music, two food films, three cooking demonstrations, three workshops, and multiple children's activities, including a Zucchini 500 race. The highlight of the event was a Tasting Room featuring 17 restaurants that offered menu items including at least two locally grown ingredients. In addition, local wineries, breweries, and distilleries offered samples of their beverages made with local ingredients. All attendees received a Local Foods Guide and a 2016 Farmers' Market map including Northampton County's 9 producer-only farmers' markets. This event was heavily promoted within the Lehigh Valley and in surrounding counties and New Jersey with a new website <http://www.tastelv.org>, print advertising, billboards, radio, and social media advertising.

Promotional Materials:

NNC surveyed farmers during winter 2016 in order to assess their marketing needs and determine which promotional materials they would find most effective. After obtaining the results, NNC created a number of promotional materials (yard signs, window clings, bumper magnets, and banners) bearing the brightly colored BFBL label. These materials announced to passersby that they could purchase fresh, locally grown items at these farms, wineries, distilleries, farmers' markets, restaurants, and retail operations.

In the spring of 2017, we created a full-color, 84-page Local Foods Guide that contains information about all farms, farm stands, farmers' markets, CSAs, Farm Share programs, vineyards, value-added producers, retail operations, food cooperatives, mobile markets, restaurants, and institutions that provide Lehigh Valley-grown foods to consumers, as well as a Lehigh Valley harvest calendar. 30,000 copies of the Guide were printed.

Impact on Community:

Online Strategies

To date, 127 businesses that provide locally grown foods (67 farms (18 CSAs), 14 farmers' markets, 14 restaurants, 7 retail operations, 6 wineries/distilleries, and others) have created listings on the new www.BuyLocalGLV.org website. Since its inception in February 2016, the site has received 16,590 unique visitors who viewed an average of 2.58 pages and remained on the site for 2:20 minutes. Of the more than 56,965 page views, 30% were visitors to use the Local Food Finder.

The CSA informational charts were made available on our website and promoted through social media. A boosted Facebook post reached 18,022 people and resulted in 281 people clicking through for more information about CSAs.

The promotional video entitled, “Building our Local Food System,” was viewed 13,553 times on Facebook. We had a 45% increase in Facebook likes in 2016, rising from 4,125 to 5,984 fans. We now have 6,406 likes – a 55% increase since the beginning of 2016! Our posts are reaching an average of 1,400 people per post.

Farmers were surveyed about our online strategies. 96% of respondents indicated that the BuyLocalGLV website was helpful in promoting their local food business, while 67% of these indicated that the website was very or extremely helpful. Farmers commented that *“People mostly find us through internet searches, through the BFBL website...”* and *“I think the revamp did a great job in making it easy for customers to find what they are looking for (CSAs, markets, etc.). I love the layout and usability.”* Farmers also found that our e-newsletters (92%) and social media promotions (91%) were helpful in promoting their local food businesses, with 71% and 65% finding them to be very or extremely helpful.

2016 Buy Local Challenge:

The Buy Local Challenge ran for 22 weeks, from May 1st through September 30th, 2016. The Challenge promotional video was viewed 20,754 times on FB. In total, we had 1,436 people (496 households) take the Challenge, pledging to spend a total of \$10,610 more on locally grown foods per week throughout the 2016 growing season. This exceeded our goal of having 400 pledge to spend an extra \$10 per week on locally grown foods. Twenty-one prizes were awarded and announced through social media, thus creating more excitement for the Challenge.

At the end of the growing season, participants were asked via email to take a short survey to calculate their actual increase in spending on locally grown foods. Survey respondents indicated that they had pledged to spend an average of \$15.41 more on locally grown foods this season (\$16.50 median). When asked what they actually spent, it was reported that they spent an average of \$22.76 per week on locally grown foods, 48% more than they had pledged! They participated an average of 18.5 weeks, thus contributing \$209,000 to our local food economy. In addition, using the multiplier of 1.449 for locally grown foods in the Lehigh Valley, this added an additional \$102,000 to our local economy, benefitting local business that provide goods and services to our farm businesses. In total, \$311,000 was added to the Lehigh Valley economy! Farmers were surveyed about the event; 93% indicated that the Challenge was helpful in promoting their local food business. One farmer noted that this event *“Seemed to get a lot of consumers interested in buying more local.”*

Taste: A Celebration of Local Farms and Food:

More than 2,000 people attended *Taste: A Celebration of Local Farms and Food* to learn about and experience the many facets of our local food economy. A promotional video entitled, “Taste: A Celebration of Local Farms & Food” was viewed 2,182 times on Facebook. A contest in the Morning Call (a local newspaper) attracted 500 participants, 497 of whom were not familiar with BFBLGLV. Of the tickets purchased for the Tasting Room, 82 percent were new to the local food scene. Vendors noted that the people participating were not the usual farmers’ market crowd; rather, we succeeded in attracting new consumers to learn about our local food system and purchase from our local farmers. And local farmers were very pleased with their sales. Chipotle, one of our sponsors, provided \$5,000 in vouchers

for people to spend at the farmers' market, which gave shoppers an incentive to look at the local foods being offered. One CSA farmer obtained three new mid-season members at the event, stating, *"We did have a few mid-season sign-ups as a result of tabling at this event! It's incredibly helpful for us to have visibility opportunities."* 93% of farmers surveyed indicated that the Taste event was helpful in promoting their local food business and 57% found it to be very or extremely helpful. One farmer said, *"We loved this event. We had great sales."* Another noted that *"We were able to market to people we normally don't have access to."*

Promotional Materials:

NNC surveyed farmers during winter 2017 asking them to rate the BFBLGLV promotional materials. 87.5% indicated that they found the yard signs, window clings, bumper magnets, and banners helpful for promoting their local food business, and 67% said they found these materials to be very or extremely helpful. Comments included:

- *"Lots of BFBL brand recognition whenever we use these."*
- *"We love having our BFBLGLV sign outside our farm & as a bumper sticker."*
- *"POP Materials were awesome! So great to have these for pricing signage...Attractive and promotes BFBL."*

To date, NNC has distributed more than half of the 2017-19 Local Foods Guides to farmers' markets, local food providers, visitor centers, the PA welcome center, libraries, doctors' offices, and numerous other locations throughout the Lehigh Valley. 100% of our farmers who responded to our survey indicated that the Local Foods Guide was helpful in promoting their local food business, and 73% found it to be very or extremely helpful. One farmer commented, *"These guides are incredible – I take them everywhere I go with a waiting room, I give them out at talks, I leave them in offices. People seem to really love these."*

ii. Goal/Objective 2: Promoting direct producer-to-consumer markets in underserved communities

a. Progress Made:

NNC created flyers showing locations (Farm Share programs, farm stands, farmers' markets, urban farms, and mobile markets) in the Lehigh Valley where SNAP participants could use their benefits and Double SNAP to obtain fresh, local produce. These locations were also listed on our website. In addition, the Local Foods Guide indicates which local food providers accept FMNP vouchers and SNAP benefits, and provides information about the Double SNAP program.

NNC also worked with the Easton Hunger Coalition and the Lehigh Valley Food Policy Council to create gleaning projects on our local farms.

Impact on Community:

Flyers were distributed in Easton, Southside Bethlehem, Bath, Bangor, Nazareth, and Slatington. We also list locations that offer Double SNAP on our website: there are now 24 participating locations! <http://www.buylocalglv.org/about-buy-local/improving-food-access/>. During the period of this grant,

these locations resulted in 1559 transactions involving \$22,500 in SNAP sales and \$16,100 in Double SNAP incentives for fresh, local produce.

In 2015, we identified three farms interested in the gleaning project. Two of the farms were willing to allow volunteers to enter their fields post-harvest and allow volunteers to pick any remaining produce. One farm did the picking themselves but asked for volunteers to pick up the produce and deliver it to where it was needed. Local food pantries were very thankful to have fresh produce to offer to their clients. In 2016, the Lehigh Valley Gleaning Network was formed. We helped connect them to more farms, and they collected 13,000 pounds of food from about 20 farms, suppliers, and home gardeners to distribute to 26 pantries and feeding programs.

Goal/Objective 3: Develop new market opportunities for farmers.

b. Progress Made:

In March 2016, we held our second Local Grower Local Buyer event where local growers could meet wholesale buyers in the Greater Lehigh Valley.

In January 2017, we held a one-day workshop for farmers, entitled *“Wholesale Success: Building a Regional Food System.”* This workshop informed our farmers about meeting the needs of wholesale buyers, intentional crop planning, packing for wholesale markets, and promoting their farm brands. The workshop culminated with a “Meet the Buyer” panel featuring different types of wholesale buyers: an independent grocery store, a small regional distributor, and a large distributor.

c. Impact on Community:

The Local Grower Local Buyer event was attended by 32 farmers, vineyards, and value-added producers who gathered to offer samples of their locally grown foods and beverages to 26 chefs and food service providers. The farmers told us that they made many new contacts, and buyers at the event were pleased to be able to find out about the extensive variety of local foods available in the Lehigh Valley. BFBL also continues to assist institutional buyers with purchasing locally grown food. Chef John Soder at Lafayette College purchased more than \$35,000 of locally grown foods in October, 2016. BFBL has also now incorporated a wholesale food guide into the BuyLocalGLV website.

The Wholesale workshop had 35 attendees. Surveys showed that 100% of attendees learned something new and could make more informed decisions about managing risks.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.
 - i. Number of direct jobs created: NNC hired two part-time employees to help with this project.
 - ii. Number of jobs retained: NNC retained one full-time employee to manage this project.
 - iii. Number of indirect jobs created: It is assumed that many indirect jobs were created by this project, although we do not have exact numbers. We surveyed our farm partners at the end of the 2016 season and found that in 73% of cases, sales were up from the

previous year. In addition, 57% of partners stated that this increase in sales was directly related to BFBL promotions. It is assumed that the increases in sales and the new markets created and expanded (below) led to an increase in employment at these venues.

- i. Number of markets expanded: 11 farmers' markets, 43 farm stands/markets, 19 CSAs
- iv. Number of new markets established: 5 new farmers' markets, 22 new farm businesses (10 of which are new farmers), 5 new CSAs
- v. Market sales increased by 8.3%.
- vi. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 67
 - a. Percent Increase: 16% increase (58 farms in 2015)

3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

Yes, new farmers' markets were created in Bangor, West Bethlehem, Coopersburg, and Bethlehem Township, and a new farm market was created in Slatington. Both Bangor and Slatington have low-income populations.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

- i. Who are your community partners?

Penn State Extension
Lehigh Valley Food Policy Council
PASA
Rodale Institute
ReNew Lehigh Valley
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Kellyn Foundation
St Luke's University Hospital Network
Lehigh Valley Health Network
Easton Hunger Coalition
Second Harvest Food Bank
United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley
Bethlehem Health Bureau
Easton GEDP

- ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the FMPP project?

These partners have helped spread the word about locally grown foods by distributing materials (particularly in low-income neighborhoods), telling their clients about our activities, and sharing our social media posts. They were also present at our local foods event to help promote the Lehigh Valley's local food economy.

- iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this FMPP grant?

Our partners will continue to provide information about our work to their clients.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?

We hired a contractor to build our BuyLocalGLV.org website, the Buy Local Challenge page, and the TasteLV.org website. All three sites have been incredible assets in helping to get the word about locally grown foods in the Lehigh Valley.

We hired an event planner to assist in organizing the Taste event. This contractor was instrumental in getting the 17 restaurants to come to the event, assisted them in completing all the necessary paperwork with the Bethlehem Health Bureau and Bethlehem Fire Department, ensured that they were in compliance with Health Bureau regulations, and oversaw the Tasting Room at the event.

We hired a designer to lay out our new 2017 Local Foods Guide. This designer created a beautiful booklet, which draws more attention to our local food providers.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?*

i. If yes, how did you publicize the results?

Results of the Buy Local Challenge and the Taste Event were presented on our website, in an e-newsletter, and on our Facebook Page. We have been distributing our 2017 Local Foods Guide since May.

ii. To whom did you publicize the results? General Public

iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach?

We have had 16,590 unique visitors to our website. The e-newsletters were sent to 3,762 households (20% open rate). Facebook posts reach 1400 people on average. 15,000 copies of our 2017 Local Foods Guide have been distributed so far.

We have attached the following promotional materials electronically along with this report:

BFBL_LocalFoodGuide2017.pdf

Screenshot of the www.buylocalglv.org/buy-local-challenge/ site during the final days of the Challenge

Screenshots of the www.TasteLV.org homepage and sponsors page

Taste rack card

Copies of Registration Forms for the Local Grower Local Buyer event and Wholesale Success Workshop

Data from Facebook showing we reached 194,473 people with our ads, as well as screenshots of 2 FB ads

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?

i. If so, how did you collect the information?

We surveyed our farm and market partners in early January 2017.

ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)?

See data in question 2 above. In addition, we received the following comments about how this project has helped our local farmers:

BFBLGLV remains an important way to reach new potential customers in the area.

Thank you for your hard work in promoting our farms and agriculture in the region.

I find we get a lot of benefit from the social media and e-letters. Thank you for your support.

8. Budget Summary:

i. As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: ☒

ii. Did the project generate any income? Yes

a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award?

Yes, we generated \$10,844 in program event from ticket sales and booth fees at the Taste event. We used this income to pay salary and fringe benefits for our Program Director to continue promoting the Lehigh Valley local food economy, organize the Wholesale Workshop, and create a 2017 Local Foods Guide.

9. Lessons Learned:

We have had great success in promoting the Greater Lehigh Valley local food economy. The new website, e-newsletters, and social media have all been invaluable in getting the word out about the locally grown foods that are available here. Consumers are eager to receive this information.

The Buy Local Challenge created excitement and helped get the message out even more. There was an initial cost of creating a designated web page for the Challenge, but we will be able to reuse this page in future years, allowing us to repeat the Challenge at a low cost.

The Taste Event was very successful in reaching new people who don't normally shop for locally grown foods; however, organizing this event was very time-consuming, and promoting it was very expensive. The scope and size of this event requires extra staff and advertising dollars, which is quite onerous for a small non-profit. We believe that there may be more cost-effective ways to educate people about locally grown foods.

10. Future Work:

This work will continue beyond the performance period. This project has considerably increased the number of people aware of locally grown foods in the Greater Lehigh Valley, and they will continue to use our online resources and Local Foods Guides to find local foods. We are also attracting more farmers each year to join us and be included in our promotion of locally grown foods. We will ensure that our local food providers keep their information on the website up-to-date. We will also provide the latest information on farmers' markets, CSAs, and agritourism in the Lehigh Valley. Over the next year, we will distribute the remainder of the 2017-2019 Local Foods Guides. We are also creating a video to promote agritourism this fall.

For our wholesale buyers, we will host another Local Grower Local Buyer event next year and continue to connect local food providers with our wholesale buyers. We will also continue to refer buyers to our website to find sources of locally grown foods.

Despite all of our promotions, there was a general decline in sales for individual vendors at farmers' markets in 2016. (Although many farmers indicated that their sales at farmers' markets declined, 73% of our surveyed partners indicated that their gross sales from all sources increased in 2016.) We are unsure which factors are causing this decline in sale at farmers' markets. Our partners indicated that they believe the decrease was due to the rainy weather and increased competition from other sources of locally grown foods (farm stands, markets, and CSAs as well as grocery stores). Only a small fraction of the Greater Lehigh Valley population is actually shopping at farmers' markets, so there is definitely room for growth by encouraging more people to purchase locally grown foods. We believe that more research is needed about the shopping

habits of consumers at farmers' markets in order to better promote these venues to the general public. We are hoping to conduct this research in the coming year.